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ER-1-5287

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5 February 1951

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Request from Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy

1. Senator Brien McMahon, Chairman, Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy, has requested a comprehensive estimate on Soviet capabilities "to impair, prevent, or frustrate the delivery of atomic weapons to targets inside the USSR".

2. This agency, with the assistance of the Departmental intelligence organizations, is willing to undertake the preparation of the necessary estimate, which we believe is desirable to insure Congressional support.

3. However, Senator McMahon's request necessitates an appraisal of Soviet defensive capabilities in terms of U. S. offensive capabilities, and this can only be done with the cooperation of the Weapons Systems Evaluation Group because of its recent operational analyses in this field.

4. Therefore, I request your authorization for the Weapons Systems Evaluation Group to participate in this project. The finished product will be issued as a national estimate with the same limited distribution as that recently given to the report on the Soviet atomic energy program.

s/
WALTER B. SMITH
Director

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